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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a community research project which preceded the development of the Kamehameha Early Education Project (KEEP). The community project was designed to assist teachers in solving classroom behavior and academic problems. The initial focus on workshops and theories proved inadequate for dealing with daily classroom problems. A subsequent approach involved classroom consultants who worked with teachers in designing strategies for more effective teaching and classroom management. These strategies consisted of a 3-step process: identifying the target behavior, recording the occurrence of the behavior in the classroom, and developing an intervention strategy. It is suggested that this approach not only reduced problem behaviors but also significantly increased the teachers' sensitivity and responsiveness to individual and cultural differences. (BD)

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Technical Report #2

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The Kamehameha Early Education Program

The Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) is a research and development program of The Kamehameha Schools/Bernice P. Bishop Estate. The mission of KEEP is the development, demonstration, and dissemination of methods for improving the education of Hawaiian and Part-Hawaiian children. These activities are conducted at the Ka Na'i Pono Research and Demonstration School, and in public classrooms in cooperation with the State Department of Education. KEEP projects and activities involve many aspects of the educational process, including teacher training, curriculum development, and child motivation, language, and cognition. More detailed descriptions of KEEP's history and operations are presented in Technical Reports #1-4.

Abstract

This report summarizes the education-related conclusions of the community research project which preceded the Kamehameha Early Education Project. The need for classroom specific research is discussed. An approach to teacher training that significantly increases sensitivity and responsiveness to individual and cultural differences is described. Examples of needed research and promising lines of investigation are presented.

Technical Report #2

Solving Problems in Hawaiian-American Classrooms: Excellent Teaching and Cultural Factors[1,2]

Ronald Gallimore Roland G. Tharp

Many behavioral scientists and educators have argued that cultural interface problems are most effectively and appropriately solved by adaptation of school programs and practices to the culture and behavior of students. Many who take this position, however, have offered only general recommendations, long on theory and short on details. There is often an implicit assumption that teachers and administrators can proceed from general strategy suggestions derived from basic socio-cultural, linguistic, and psychological research. This assumption was shared by members of the research team whose work in the Hawaiian community of 'Aina Pumehana[3] preceded the Kamehameha Early Education Project (Gallimore, Boggs, and Jordan, 1974; Gallimore and Howard, 1968; MacDonald and Gallimore, 1971).

Providing Assistance: One Strategy

At various times early in the cultural analysis, attempts were made to help schools in their efforts to better equip teachers working in 'Aina Pumehana. Research team personnel organized and taught college courses; workshops and orientations were planned and conducted, etc. During one August,

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[1]Appreciation is due Joan W. Boggs and Steven T. Boggs for their comments on an earlier draft of this report.

[2]Preparation of this report was partially supported by the Sociobehavioral Research Group, MRRC, UCLA.

[3]A pseudonym.

an ambitious four week workshop for the entire faculty of Pumehana School was organized, with input by educators, community residents, students, and researchers. The researchers devoted their portion of the program to descriptions of Pumehanan culture and behavior patterns, child management and training practices, interpersonal style, customs, and the like. Teachers also visited homes, local shops and restaurants, listened to talks by community residents, worked with small groups of students, participated in preparation for a luau, learned songs, and so forth. All of these activities aimed at orienting and sensitizing teachers to the culture of the students.

Initially, the experience appeared to have enhanced sharply the teachers' confidence and expectations; however, after a few weeks in the classroom, the effect of the orientation was counterproductive, if anything. Teachers' experience with the students contradicted the images conveyed by the researchers, who had worked with families and children in the homes. The generalizations offered by the researchers and those developed by the teachers themselves during the course of the orientation apparently proved of little value in dealing with day-to-day problems. A variety of reactions were observed. Some teachers blamed themselves, and attributed their difficulties to personal inadequacies; a response reinforced by the researchers' confidence that Pumehanan children were teachable, and that failure could in no way be the responsibility of these "engaging people." Other teachers simply resigned. Some began to question the methods of the researchers, their conclusions, their generalizations. The few veteran teachers[4] were mildly amused to find

[4]There were actually only a few teachers who had been at 'Aina Pumehana schools for more than two years. The turnover in staff during the years we worked in the community and those immediately preceding had ranged from 75 to 90 percent! The majority of teachers had zero or one year of teaching experience. Many were also recent arrivals from the mainland U.S.

another set of "experts" were human after all, and had no more found the panacea for 'Aina Pumehana's educational problems than the horde who had preceded them.

The special orientation had been held in August. By Thanksgiving, formal and informal evaluation showed that whatever had been accomplished during the summer had not helped teachers solve their problems.

Left to their own devices, the teachers had not been able to make use of what the researchers had found and reported, though certainly not because of lack of innovative schemes offered by the researchers. After several years of research in the community, generating ideas about how to solve the education problems of 'Aina Pumehana was a simple matter. Thinking of ways that a teacher ought to behave, how a classroom should be organized, what activities might be tried--all derived from research and personal experiences in the community, with families, and with students in the school--became a form of entertainment for the researchers.

There are several possible reasons why the initial efforts provided the teachers so little aid: a faulty format of communicating the research findings, incorrect conclusions, and the like. We believe, now, that these well-intended efforts failed as a result of errors of strategy. First, the researchers greatly underestimated the difficulty of planning, developing, and evaluating classroom innovations derived from <u>any</u> source. The "ideas" given the teachers were too abstract, and to put them into effect required, in many cases, a considerable research and development effort.

Also, the researchers failed to appreciate that in moment to moment contacts with students, teachers cannot practically distinguish or separate cultural problems from any other kind. They are inevitably confounded. Thus, to solve a putatively cultural problem, other difficulties--for example, those due to individual differences--must also be dealt with. Cultural

differences simply complicate an already difficult task. They do not add a unique dimension, rather they introduce another set of adjustments that the teacher must make.

Providing Assistance: Another Strategy

After it became clear that the lectures and workshops had been relatively unproductive, a major effort to provide assistance to teachers was organized under the overall supervision of Scott MacDonald (MacDonald and Gallimore, 1972; 1971; MacDonald, Gallimore, and MacDonald, 1970). Consultant services were offered to teachers for classroom problems. In some cases, the referrals for consultation focused on relatively limited aspects of classroom practice; in others, the effort involved a major innovation sponsored by the school administration (e.g. a special classroom for "dropouts"). The teachers variously perceived the consultant as a visiting "professor", as the local "psychologist", or as one of those "experts" who did family research.

> Whatever the teachers expected when we announced our readiness to assist them, few thought that we would rely on them to solve their problems. Most assumed that we would give special tests to, and write reports about, problem youngsters. Some hoped we would go so far as to remove the 'emotionally disturbed', the 'recalcitrants', and the 'delinquents' from their classes. A few others vainly hoped that we would be able through some fast and perhaps hard-boiled counseling, to shape up their students' behavior problems.
>
> In retrospect, we realize that it was probably prudent of us to keep close-mouthed about our strategy for solving classroom problems. We planned relatively long-range evaluation and on-the-spot counseling intended to assist the teacher to develop skills that would promote the consequences she desired, and the teachers were not prepared for such novel intrusion. As we discovered, teachers have had a long history of receiving offers of 'assistance', and they have developed considerable cynicism toward outsiders who come bearing promises. Visitors to classrooms are inevitable, of course; but they usually represent a source of disruption of normal routine, at the very least, and many teachers have had bitter experiences with 'assisting' visitors who were much more than simple distractions (MacDonald and Gallimore, 1971, 21).

The consultants were initially overwhelmed with requests for assistance with behavior problems:

> While many teachers had long since given up the search for meaningful help from within or without the school system, most had an area of concern that they shared in common.... The fact that they felt that they could not maintain orderly classrooms and that they did not see their students moving toward suitable academic goals was deeply distressing to them. For many teachers the complex problems of the school and community were a source of profound personal anguish.
>
> They were also troubled in a more immediate sense: children in their rooms fought in front of the teacher and ignored her requests to stop, talked back, refused to turn in assigned work, and ran around in and out of the classroom at will. Teachers wanted more than salving of social conscience; they needed help in managing their seemingly uncontrollable students (MacDonald and Gallimore, 1971, 22).

Anyone who has worked in and tried to consult to schools tagged with some pejorative label, such as "slum" or "culturally deprived", will not be surprised by the flood of complaints about control, discipline, and behavior problems which greeted the consultants in 'Aina Pumehana. During our initial efforts, we had either ignored or criticized teachers who insisted on confronting us with examples and evidence of the "bad" behavior of Pumehana youth, including much that seemed either trivial or symptomatic of cultural insensitivity, poor teaching, etc. After the consultants began accepting referrals, these complaints were taken seriously. If the consultants could not get students to bring pencils and books to class, a teacher would have little reason to expect the consultants would know how to teach them to read, or do math, or anything academic. We came to appreciate that teachers would not waste time and energy on "another expert" until he could demonstrate competence in solving simple problems. Generally, teachers who were helped with minor management and behavior problems, quickly moved to academic issues. In effect, the consultant passed their test of relevance and competence if

he could provide realistic, practical, on-the-spot help.

Once in the situation, the consultants began to appreciate why the teachers had found the generalizations derived from the cultural research impractical. It was one thing to conclude that Pumehanans are affiliation-motivated, quite another to use that generalization to solve the kind of problems that the teachers faced on a day-to-day basis. It was easy to philosophize and advise others about how the entire school system ought to be reformed and what shape it ought to take. It was also easy to advise others on how to arouse the faculty and community into a united political front to demand change, increase appropriations, and the like. However, when the researchers, who had worked in the community for over two years, actually confronted the problems that they had confidently "solved" in lectures, public presentations, articles, and papers; they had no operationally detailed plans to use.

The Consultation Strategy: Training Teachers to do Empirical Analysis

The consultants turned to the strategy used by scientists and professionals whenever they do not know or understand--the methods of empirical science. The process used by the consultants and taught to teachers involved techniques of assessment and intervention that have become associated with behavior modification and behavior therapy in recent years (e.g. Bijou, et al, 1968; Tharp and Wetzel, 1969). The techniques emphasized assessment of ongoing classroom practices, student and teacher behavior, and the like.

The consultations were conducted in two basic ways: individual teachers were assisted with a specific problem on a referral basis, or consultation was provided to groups of teachers who received college credit for completing the various steps of the process (MacDonald and Gallimore, 1972). The individual cases involved essentially the same kind and range of problems as the group consultations.

The groups met once a week after school, with additional visits by the consultants to classrooms as needed. Once teachers learned the skills of empirical analysis, many continued to innovate. Months, even years, later, we have encountered teachers who are still using the empirical approach to problem-solving, including teachers who learned the techniques second-hand from those who had participated in the consultation project.

In general, the consultants used a three step process, although in over 100 consultations there was some variety. The first step was identifying and conceptualizing the teacher's objectives or problems in observable, behavioral terms. For example, a teacher who complained about "lack of motivation" was asked to specify an observable classroom-related behavior that she would regard as evidence of sufficient motivation. She decided that finishing daily assignments was an acceptable criterion. Another teacher wanted to decrease the incidence of changing seats, talking out of turn, and nonattentive behavior. Since all of these involved behaviors to be eliminated, she was asked to suggest what she wanted to encourage. Eventually, she decided she did not care how much the students talked or changed seats as long as they finished their daily class assignments. In general, the consultants found teachers eager to use relatively concrete, precise behavioral language, although there was an initial tendency to talk "psychology" to the psychological consultants.

The second step was the development of simple, economical means of keeping records of the occurrence of target behaviors. Teachers are accustomed to keeping behavioral and performance records: the daily grade book, student work files, etc. Thus, this step in the consultation process was not novel--although in most cases it involved assessments usually done by "impression." What was recorded, and how, varied enormously. Some teachers tape recorded student discussions for later analysis; others asked students to keep records on peers

and themselves. Some simply systematized their own ongoing records; a few bought hand-held counting devices or stop watches. In some cases, the consultants participated in this phase; they sat in the room to collect observations and to provide feedback to teachers. Recordings were made over enough days to obtain a reliable indication of the base rate of the target behavior.

> About 10 percent of our teachers reported that simply recording undesirable behavior eliminated the problem! ....In a number of cases, the effect was due to students' awareness that their behavior was being recorded....
>
> In a few cases, the teacher reported that the problem to be assessed was not really a problem. One teacher who had initially believed her class to be unruly and exceedingly noisy found so few instances to record that she decided her tolerance level for misbehavior and noise was unrealistically low, and that she was simply being petty, allowing herself to be irritated by trivial episodes (MacDonald and Gallimore, 1971, 155).

The third phase was the development of an intervention plan. At this point, the consultants instroduced the concept of contingent reinforcement, and discussed the idea that behavior is a product of its consequences. Examples of teacher-controlled consequences were given, and ways they might be used in a contingent fashion were discussed. The teachers were also told that our classroom observations indicated that Pumehanan teachers had more influence than they realized over their students.

> Our concern that the teachers would have too few reinforcers proved to be wholly unfounded. Teachers knew what would serve as reinforcers for students. The most frequent and effective method involved asking the students, who usually told the teacher what they wanted (free time, more books to read, better grades) and observing students (watching what they did when given free time) (MacDonald and Gallimore, 1971, 156).

At this point, each teacher designed and implemented an intervention program. Some required extensive help from the consultants, but the majority seemed to have grasped the strategy without much difficulty. All teachers chose to work on problem behaviors and not what could be called academic issues.

For example, teachers worked on getting children to nap, to remain seated and attentive, to bring books, to stop fighting, etc.

Although the consultants had urged the teachers to devise interventions that involved reinforcing desired behavior, they were allowed to make an unpleasant outcome contingent on undesirable behavior if they so chose. Eighty-six percent (32 out of 39) of the teachers who used negative consequences failed to achieve improvement (MacDonald and Gallimore, 1972; 1971). Those who had used a negative consequence redesigned their interventions and, as a result, a total of 93 percent (69 out of 74) of all the teachers in the consultation project achieved success on their first interventions. An intervention was judged successful if 65 percent of the students involved showed improvement for three consecutive weeks in the direction specified in the plan. If six or fewer students were involved, all must have shown three weeks of improvement before an intervention was considered a success.

Other failures were largely a result of refusal by teachers to carry out their plans systematically; some objected on the grounds that to be systematic with children was not only unnatural but unethical. A few were simply so poorly organized and incompetent that they were not about to do anything systematically, including being at work on time (or even being at work at all). Despite the small minority who either would not or could not use an empirical approach, we found teachers to be interested in the welfare of the students, eager to improve their skills, and capable of doing so.

In the next phase of the consultation project, nearly all teachers focused on academic matters. Examples of the academic interventions include:

> A kindergarten teacher developed a "baseball" game in which two teams of younsters took turns reciting simple responses to teacher questions where inclusion of a new adjective was scored as a "hit." The speech of the students became much more descriptive over the semester as

a result of this short, exciting drill.

A third grade teacher presented pictures and material from other countries and then warmly rewarded good inferences about the ways the foreign people lived. The number of students' statements relevant to the facts presented greatly increased.

A fifth grade teacher set up five stations, each demonstrating one stage of puppet making. As students constructed their own puppets, they moved from station to station, using the teacher's demonstration as a guide to their own activities. The quality of the production was considerably improved.

A seventh grade English teacher, working with students four grade levels behind, utilized a speed-reading machine to present low-level, high-interest reading material and vocabulary drills in 30-minute sessions. Students improved their speed of reading 300 percent and maintained a 70 percent comprehension level in a period of 6 weeks.

A tenth grade social studies instructor presented his class with audio tapes of current controversial issues and assigned overnight reading. During four practice sessions he responded favorably to every student statement, and asked other students to critique the statements. On the fifth day, students were tested. In 4 weeks, the "relevant" statements quadrupled, while the irrelevant statements remained at the same level (MacDonald and Gallimore, 1972, 422-423).

Eighty-seven percent (65 of 75) of the teachers carried out a successful academic intervention. More interesting, however, is the diversity of ideas and innovations. In addition to applying the lessons learned in their first efforts, we found the teachers displaying a remarkable fund of knowledge of curriculum materials and alternative classroom activities in the academic interventions. Apparently, the empirical skills they learned allowed them to more effectively use preexisting skills and knowledge.

Few consultation sessions were devoted to discussions of materials or activities, although in many instances, the empirical process was used to evaluate curriculum changes introduced by the teachers. For example, one teacher began using newspapers and magazines (car, surfing, movie, etc.) for reading instruction and systematically recorded the number of assignments

completed and new words learned, before and after the change. He originally used standard texts. We do not believe, however, that the consultation method provides sufficient information on curriculum-related problems. For example, it is possible that certain reading skills are more difficult for children to acquire because of phonetic and syntactic interference of Hawaii Creole (pidgin). For such problems, the kind of analyses that the teachers were taught to use would not be sufficiently detailed and sensitive.

Conclusions

The consultation program was based on the assumption that teachers could reduce behavior problems and improve performance by attending to the details of classroom interaction and process. The planning, imagination, and number of refinements that were necessary to develop a successful intervention underscore the highly specific nature of classroom experimentation and development. The teachers (and the consultants) attended to the specifics of the situation--the initial behavior of the students and the teacher, the definition of the goal, the development of behavior and performance indices, consideration of alternative interventions and reinforcements, etc. If a problem occurred, for example, if the response of students to an intervention did not meet expectations, further observations were made in the classroom; or students were asked to discuss the intervention; or an adjustment was made and the consequences observed and evaluated.

On a day-to-day basis, the classroom problems created by cultural interface conflict are not easy to distinguish from those that are an inevitable part of a teacher's lot. In the consultation project, the teachers did not distinguish between problems related to individual and cultural differences in their intervention planning. Moreover, it was of no practical import to the consultants to make the distinction; they did not, and probably could not

have, unless they had devoted significant research time to the task.

Teachers as Ethnographers and Experimenters

We believe that the focusing of teacher attention on the immediate classroom situation was one feature of the consultation process that is of general value in cultural interface settings.

As a result of observation training and the consultant's emphasis on continuous monitoring, the participants appeared more sensitive to individual and cultural differences, and gradually modified their practices accordingly. Although we had conceived the teacher workshops and orientations to be "sensitizing" experiences, when we stopped talking about our research, and began to show teachers how to do their own, an impressive variety of innovations and adaptations resulted. In effect, the teachers became classroom ethnographers and experimenters.

Part of the benefit apparently derived from a general increase in the teachers' knowledge of their students' abilities, interests, and levels of achievement. Because they were collecting observations and keeping records, teachers had more feedback. Presumably this increase in information helped sharpen teacher discrimination between effective and ineffective teaching practices.

Also, there was some indication that the consultation strategy encouraged the view that teachers could do something on a day-to-day basis about the problems that they faced. When the consultation project began, there was some expectation that the consultants would serve as experts dispensing advice, giving reassurance, and developing solutions. At the end of the sessions, there was a growing attitude that teacher observations and experiments were more practical and useful than the kind of generalized and abstract advice that experts and specialists usually provide. Learning more effective

reinforcement practices constituted an important element in the consultations, but, for many teachers, the real value was learning the skills of observation and analysis. These would help them deal with problems as they arose, to make greater use of existing skills and knowledge, and to become more sensitive to the behavior of their students.

Every school year, teachers must become acquainted with, and adapt instruction to, a group of individuals. If they are from a culture which is familiar, then the problems are essentially the same as those found in any task-oriented social organization involving 25 or more individual personalities and levels of ability. To individualize instruction, teachers must secure and maintain an ongoing assessment of each student's interest, level of performance, and current achievement. The adjustment to cultural differences involves the same process. Generalizations and stereotypes drawn from even the most extensive cultural analysis will not provide teachers with sufficiently detailed information. Paradoxically, abstract discussions of culture and behavior research findings seem to make teachers less sensitive to differences that actually may be present.

There is every reason to believe that information about the culture of their students can help teachers and that such training should be part of teacher preparation. More important is the development by teachers of practical ethnographic and experimental research skills that will permit them to become more aware of students and their cultures on a day-to-day basis in the classroom. In this way, teachers may discover those aspects of their own behavior, (and other situational factors) that influence student adjustment and performance as it relates to individual and cultural factors.

The Next Steps

The consultation research undertaken by MacDonald and Gallimore must be

viewed as suggestive and encouraging rather than as entirely successful. Even with the changes and improvements obtained, the majority of students remained considerably below grade level in basic academic skills. The consultation program must be regarded as remedial, a "bandaid" effort. It demonstrated that much improvement could be obtained if teachers are given training in classroom management and problem analysis. It also showed that students would respond to changes in teacher practices and classroom activities.

The consultation research also clearly supports continued analysis of modes and contents of inservice teacher training. At the Kamehameha Early Education Project (KEEP), the facilities and resources are available to detail those adjustments in teaching practices that will enhance student performance and adjustment. The opportunity is also available to do cost/benefit analyses of various training and consultation strategies. These may be examined in the context of introducing new teaching practices as well as improving existing skills. The consultation approach, used by MacDonald and Gallimore, is but one example of the possibilities. Others include the use of video playback, direct consultant activity in the classroom, extended training, and so on.

Cultural Factors

Specifying the cultural factors that are important for the classroom requires a form and level of analysis that would be impractical to achieve through teacher efforts alone. For example, the complex relationships that exist among language, learning skills, and reading acquisition require extended investigation, and even the development of appropriate measurement tools.

Language or dialect issues are the most obvious and widely accepted examples of cultural interface conflict. Children from homes in which a language other than Standard English is spoken do have more problems

learning in public schools. However, a precise analysis of the language elements involved remains to be accomplished. For example, there is considerable debate over the role of phonetic differences between Standard English and pidgin in reading acquisition. Similarly, it is not certain whether forms of pidgin grammar interfere with learning to read Standard English sentences. It is widely assumed that this is a problem, but precisely which grammatical forms present difficulties is unknown.

Social and motivational factors may also be present, though it is clear from previous efforts that their effects may be subtle and difficult to isolate (Gallimore, Boggs, and Jordan, 1974). For example, the relationship between a child's home experience and his response to various classroom and teaching formats (e.g. peer tutoring versus teacher instruction, group versus individual work).

Another promising avenue for analysis is the effect of a child's social relationships in school on his acquisition of Standard English. Whether children choose to interact with, talk to, and learn from children in their class who speak a different dialect is largely an unexplored question. It is entirely possible that given the opportunity, primary grade children will learn Standard English "naturally" in the course of their interactions with classmates. The subsequent effects of this process on school performance are not established.

Although it has been a common assumption that children who speak pidgin do not speak Standard English, evidence is beginning to mount that this is not the case. Rather, some children are good in both dialects, others poor in any dialect, and some good in one or the other. The implications of this fact for educational planning also remain unexplored.

These examples of potentially significant cultural factors are only a part

of a larger list that could be made. We have included them here to illustrate that direct analysis of cultural factors must proceed concurrently with specification and production of excellent teaching practices. Further, useful research on cultural variables must be specific and classroom focused.

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